

STATISTICAL RELEASE 258/07

14 August 2007

**2007 SURVEY OF PUBLIC ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS TOWARD THE
ENVIRONMENT**

Headline results from the *2007 Survey of Public Attitudes and Behaviours* toward the environment are released today. They give a representative picture of what people in England think, and how they behave, across a range of issues relevant to the environment, including transport and waste recycling.

Of the issues people think government should be dealing with, the environment was the fourth most commonly mentioned behind crime, health and education.

About a quarter of people agreed with statements such as “It takes too much effort to do things that are environmentally friendly”, and “I don’t believe my behaviour and everyday lifestyle contribute to climate change”. However, about half disagreed.

Three quarters of people believe that if most people in the UK recycled more, cut down their car use or flew less, it would have a major or medium impact on the UK’s contribution to climate change. However, although 60 per cent of people believe quite a lot of people are willing to recycle more, less than a fifth think a lot of people in the UK are willing to use a car less, or fly less.

Over a half of people report that they never leave the TV on standby overnight, their mobile phone chargers plugged in nor lights on in rooms when not in them. However, approximately a fifth say they always leave the TV on standby overnight, and a similar proportion that they always leave the tap running when brushing their teeth.

The proportion of people recycling paper, glass and plastic has almost doubled since 2001. In 2007 approximately three quarters of people said they recycled these materials, mainly via regular doorstep collection.

Introduction

The results presented here follow from previous Environmental surveys run by Defra and its predecessors in 1986, 1989, 1993, 1996-7 and 2001. Where questions are comparable, time series are shown from the three most recent of these. The results for the 2007 survey were produced from data collected from a representative sample of approximately 3,600 individuals in England during spring 2007. The data were collected on behalf of Defra by the British Market Research Bureau (BMRB) during computer assisted interviews lasting on average 51 minutes. Some selected results appear here; a full report will be released in September 2007.

The survey itself was split into several sections. The results will be presented using the same structure as follows:

Attitudes and Knowledge in Relation to the Environment

Transport

Energy and Water Efficiency

Recycling

Eco-friendly Purchasing

Results on Biodiversity and Animal Welfare are also presented – the questions for these sections appeared on an additional omnibus survey, consisting of a representative sample of approximately 1,700 individuals.

A National Statistics release was issued on 27th July 2007 covering some selected results of questions on life satisfaction from this survey. Further results are included in this release.

Where applicable, each section follows the following format:

Attitudes

Behaviours

Barriers

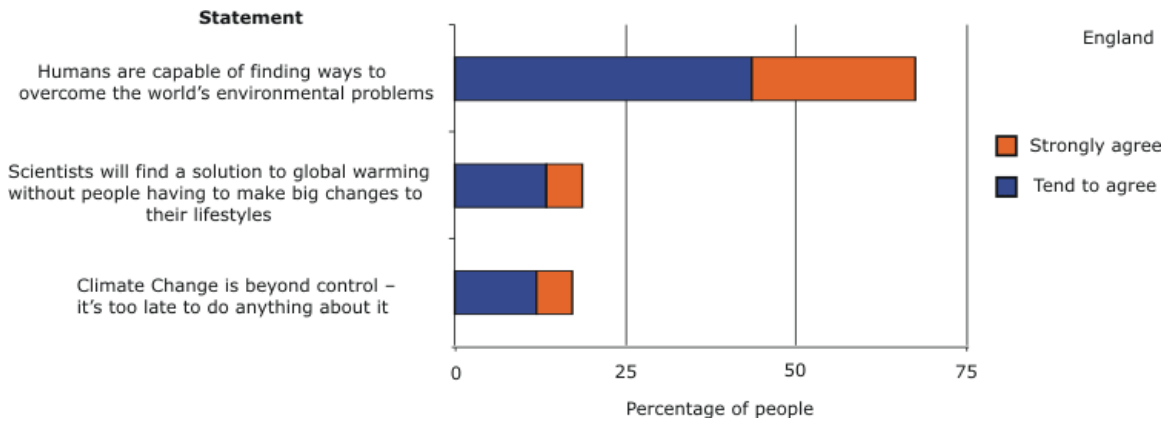
1. Attitudes and Knowledge in Relation to the Environment

The survey included a section that investigated attitudes toward and knowledge about specific aspects of the environment and, in particular, climate change.

1.1 Attitudes

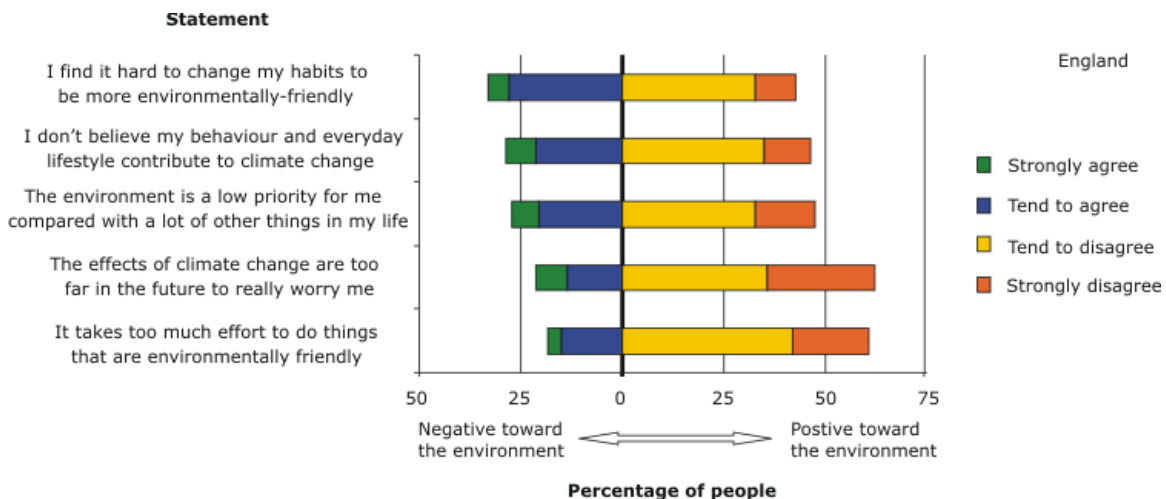
All attitudinal assessments took the form of a statement about a specific issue or belief. The individual indicated whether they strongly agreed, tended to agree, neither agreed nor disagreed, tended to disagree or strongly disagreed with these statements. Questions of this format appeared in all sections of the survey and results for attitudes toward particular issues such as transport and recycling can be found in those sections.

Attitudes toward the environment and climate change, 2007



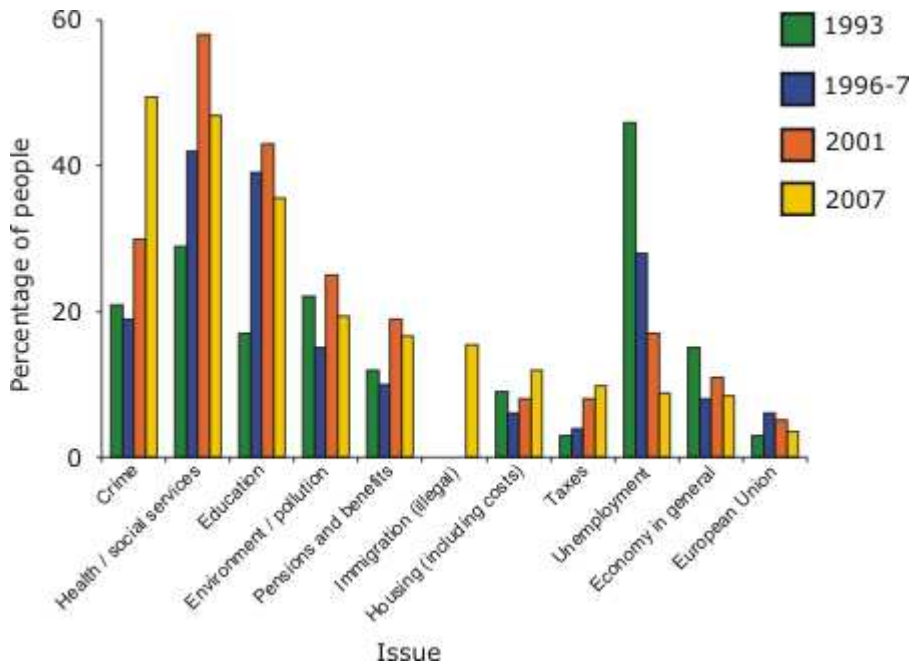
When asked about their attitudes toward the environment, 67 per cent of people strongly agreed or tended to agree that “humans are capable of finding ways to overcome the world’s environmental problems”. However, only 19 per cent strongly agreed or tended to agree that “Scientists will find a solution to global warming without people having to make big changes to their lifestyles”. A similar proportion, 17 per cent, strongly agreed or tended to agree that “Climate change is beyond control – it’s too late to do anything about it”.

Attitudes toward the environment and climate change, 2007



Approximately a quarter of people strongly agreed or tended to agree with range of non-environmentally friendly statements such as, “I don’t believe my behaviour and everyday lifestyle contribute to climate change”, or, “The environment is a low priority for me compared with a lot of other things in my life”. Eighteen per cent agreed that “It takes too much effort to do things that are environmentally friendly”.

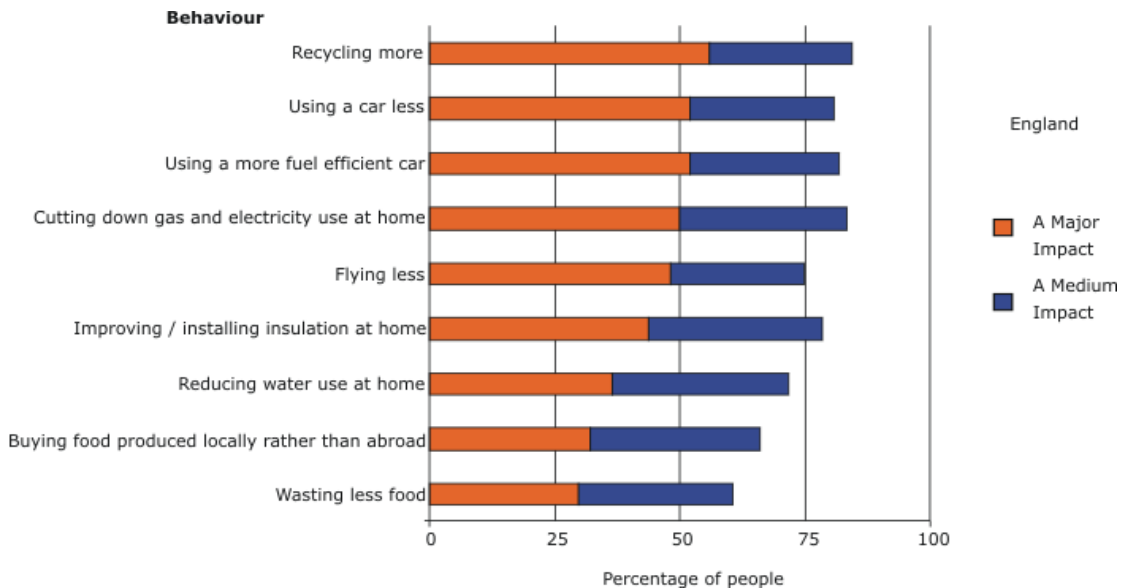
Issues that the Government should be dealing with, 1993-2007



When asked without prompting what are the most important issues Government should be dealing with, the greatest proportion of people, 49 per cent, said crime. 47 per cent mentioned health or social services, 36 per cent education and 19 per cent the environment. These were also the top 4 answers in 2001, although the proportions of people mentioning health, education or the environment have fallen from 58 per cent, 43 per cent and 25 per cent respectively, while the proportion of people mentioning crime has increased from 30 per cent. Individuals could mention as many issues as they wished, hence percentages will sum to greater than 100.

In 1993, 46 per cent of people mentioned unemployment but only 9 per cent did so in 2007. In 2007 16 per cent mentioned Immigration (with most highlighting illegal immigration and asylum seekers), an issue not mentioned by a significant proportion in previous years.

Beliefs about the impact of behaviours on the UK's contribution to climate change if most people in UK were prepared to do them, 2007

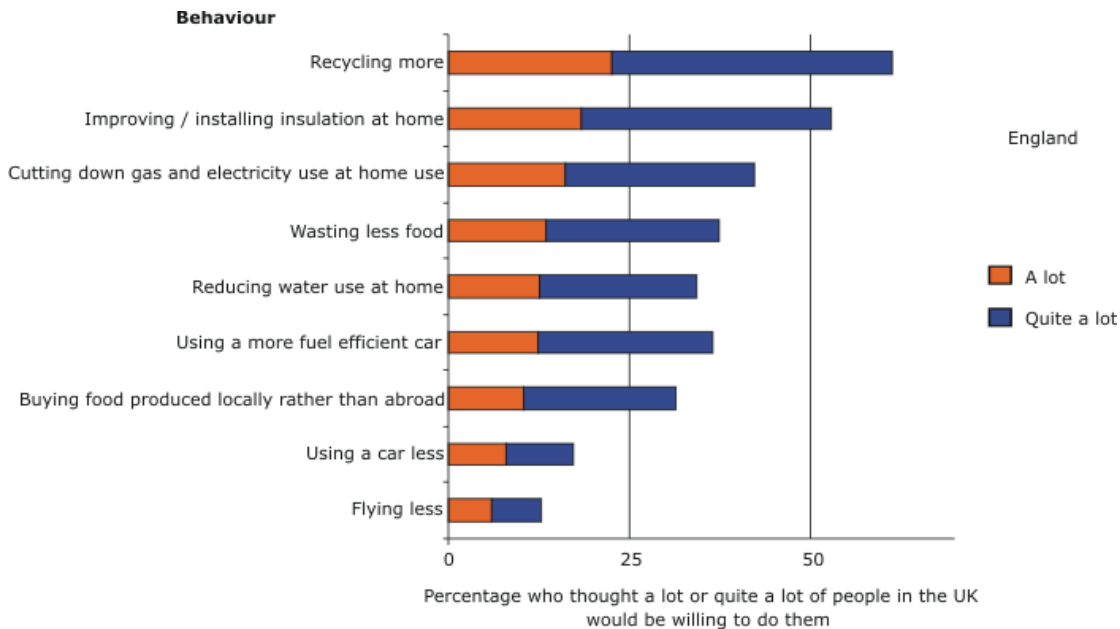


Over 50 per cent of people believed that “recycling more”, “using a car less”, “using a more fuel efficient car” and/or “cutting down on gas and electricity use in the home” would have a major impact on the UK’s contribution to climate change if most people in UK were prepared to do them. Over 75 per cent thought these behaviours as well as “flying less” and “installing installation” would have a medium or major impact on the UK’s contribution to climate change.

The behaviours for which the smallest proportion thought there would be a major impact were “buying food produced locally rather than abroad”, and “wasting less food”, with 32 per cent and 30 per cent of people thinking these would have a major impact respectively.

The behaviours for which the greatest proportion of people thought there would be no impact on the UK’s contribution to climate change were “buying food produced locally rather than abroad” and “flying less” for which 9 per cent and 8 per cent respectively said there would be no impact.

Beliefs about the number of people in the UK who are willing to take up behaviours that could impact upon the UK's contribution to climate change, 2007



Over 50 per cent thought that a lot or quite a lot of people would be willing to “recycle more” and/or “install / improve insulation at home”. This compares with 13 per cent who thought a lot or quite a lot of people would be willing to “fly less”, and 17 per cent who thought a lot or quite a lot would be willing to “use a car less”.

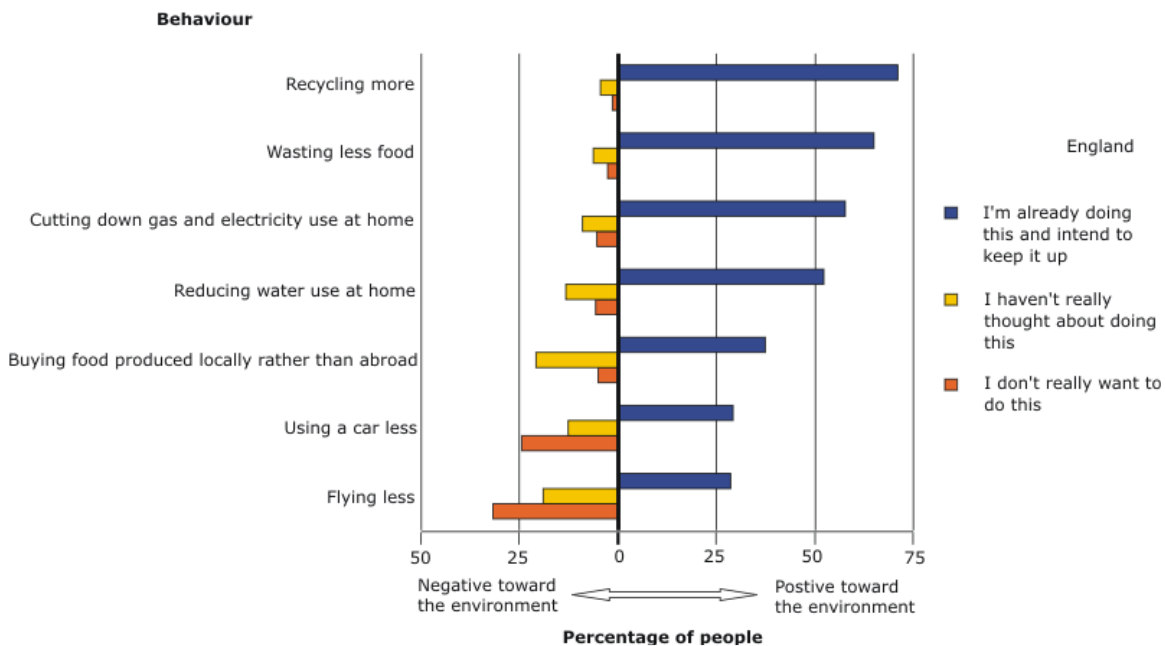
The proportion of people who say they themselves carry out behaviours such as recycling or installing insulation, as well as the frequency of car use and air travel will be covered in later sections.

Comparing beliefs about the impact of behaviours with beliefs about the number of people willing to do them

When the results on people’s beliefs about the impact of different behaviours on climate change are compared with beliefs about the number of people willing to do them, “recycling more” appears as the top answer in both questions. However, although people also believe that if most people “used a car less” or “flew less”, there would be a major impact on the UK’s contribution to climate change, few thought many people would be willing to do them.

1.2 Behaviours

Proportion of people engaging in environmentally friendly behaviours, 2007



When asked whether they are doing some of the environmentally friendly behaviours considered in the previous section, the greatest proportion of people, 71 per cent, said they were “recycling more rather than throwing things away” and intended to carry on doing so. More than half said they were “wasting less food”, were “cutting down on gas and electricity in the home”, and/or were “cutting down on water use in the home”.

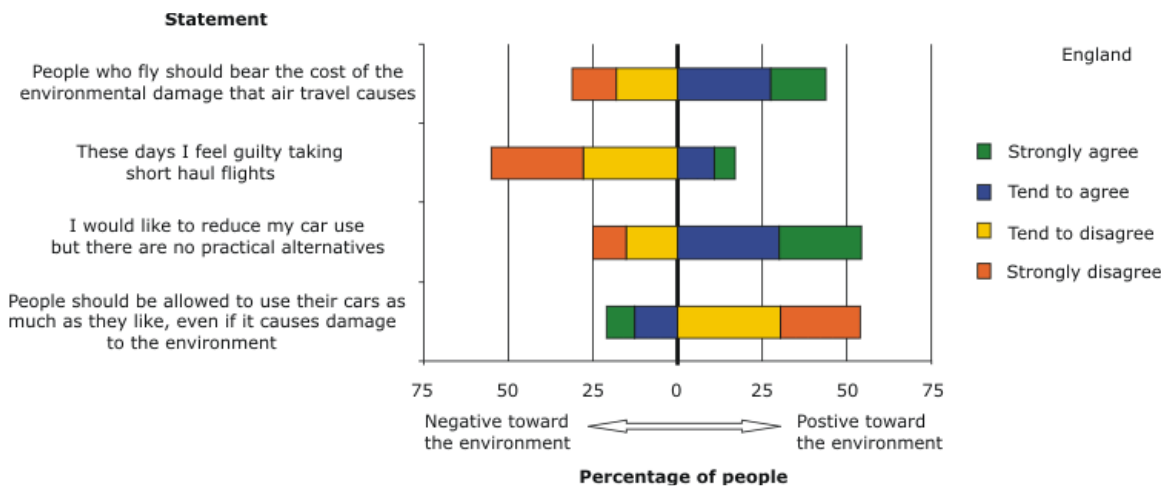
In comparison, 29 per cent of people said they were already making an effort to “use their car less” and/or “fly less”. 24 per cent and 32 per cent respectively said they “don’t really want to” “use a car less” and/or “fly less”.

Twenty-one per cent said that they “haven’t really thought about” “buying food produced locally rather than abroad”, 19 per cent “flying less” and 13 per cent “using a car less”.

2. Transport

2.1 Attitudes

Attitudes toward flying and car use, 2007

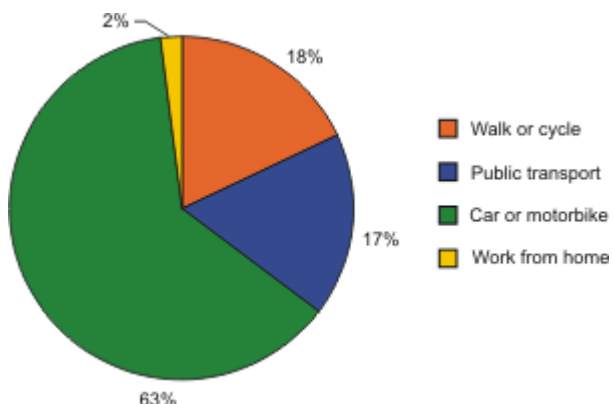


When asked for their attitudes about flying, 44 per cent strongly agreed or tended to agree that “people who fly should bear the cost of the environmental damage that air travel causes”. This was a greater proportion than strongly disagreed or tended to disagree – 31 per cent. Fewer people, 17 per cent, strongly agreed or tended to agree that they “felt guilty about taking short haul flights these days”. Over half strongly disagreed or tended to disagree with this statement.

When asked for their attitudes about car use, 54 per cent strongly disagreed or tended to disagree that “people should be allowed to use their cars as much as they like, even if it causes damage to the environment”. Eight per cent strongly agreed with this statement. Over half strongly agreed or tended to agree that they “would like to reduce their car use but find that there are no practical alternatives”.

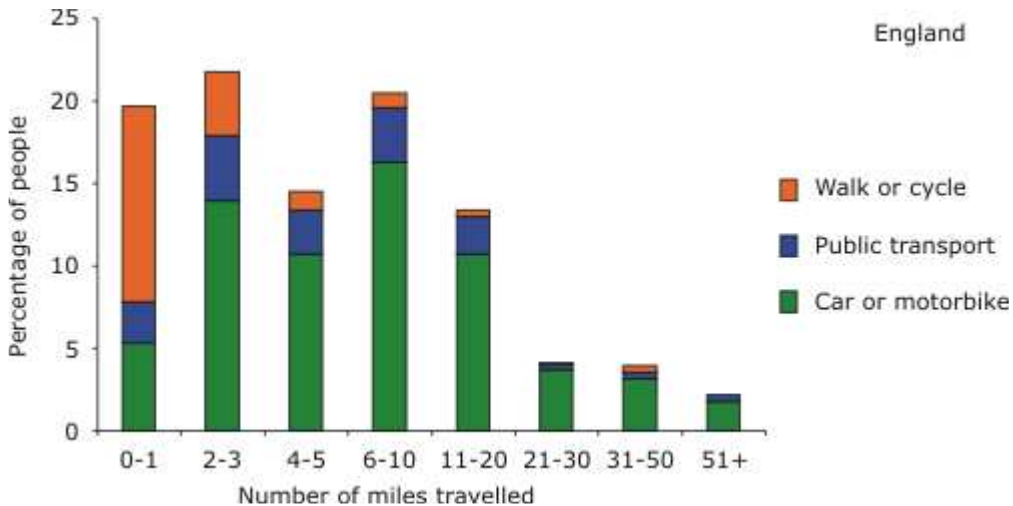
2.2 Behaviours

Method of travel to work / study, 2007



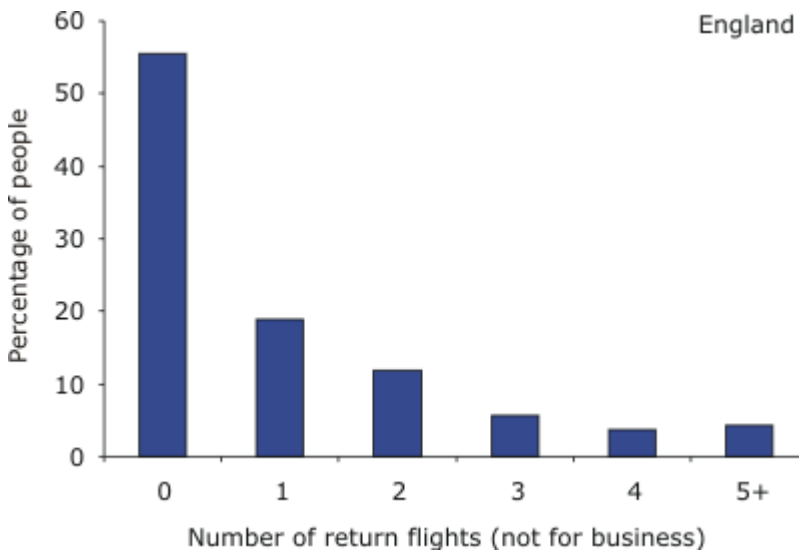
Of those who work or who are in full time education, 63 per cent usually use a car or motorbike to get there. 18 per cent walk or cycle, and a further 17 per cent use public transport. Two per cent work from home.

Method of travel to work / study by distance travelled, 2007



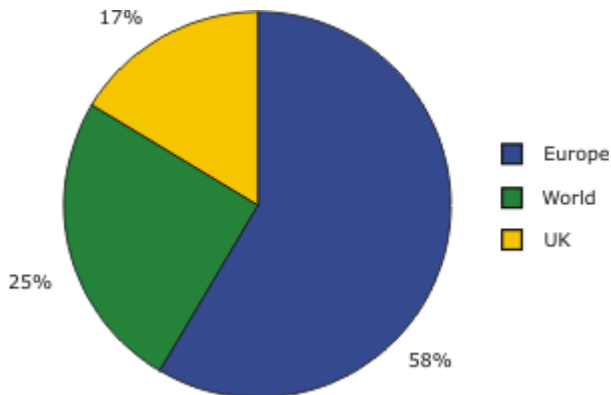
For journeys of 3 miles or less, 38 per cent walk or cycle, but for journeys of 4 miles or more, only 5 per cent walk or cycle. Fifty-nine per cent of people are at least 4 miles from where they work or study.

Proportion of people taking non-business return flights in the last year, 2007



When asked how many non-business return flights people had taken in the last year, over half said that they had not flown at all. 19 per cent had taken one return flight, and a further 12 per cent had taken two.

Destination of people taking non-business return flights in the last year, 2007



Of the total number of non-business return flights taken, 58 per cent were trips within Europe (except the UK), 25 per cent were outside Europe and 17 per cent were within the UK.

On average, for all people, there were 1.1 non-business return flights per person. However, although people who took 5 or more flights in the last year only made up 4 per cent of population, they took a third of all return flights between them. As might be expected, a greater proportion of those who took more flights earned more - those with an annual household income of £40,000 or more made up 40 per cent of the people who took 3 or more return flights, but only 11 per cent of the people who did not fly at all.

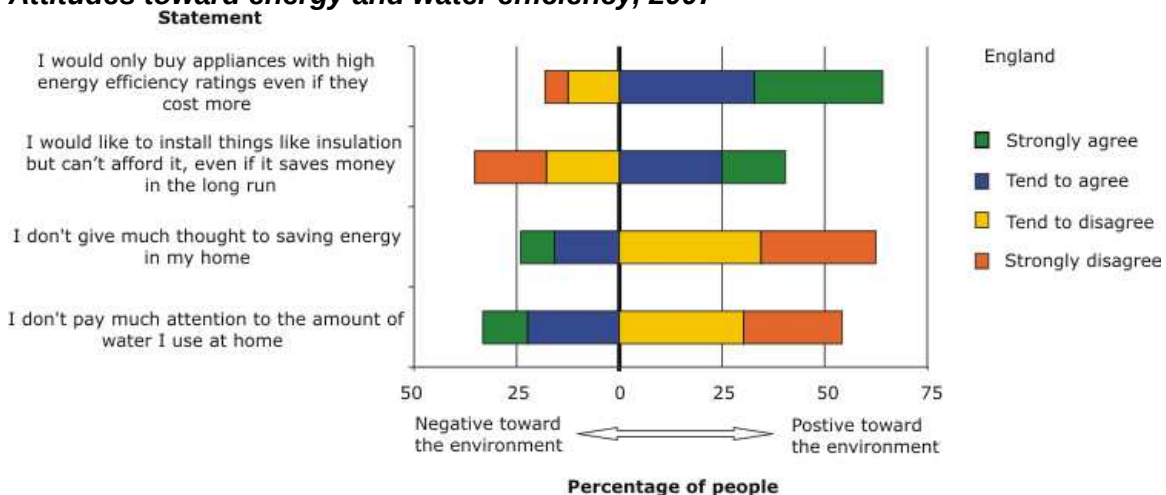
2.3 Barriers

People who took a domestic flights were prompted with reasons why they decided to fly rather than use another form of transport. The greatest proportion, 58 per cent, said that it “was quicker”. Other answers included that it “was cheaper” and that is “was easier” – given by 28 and 27 per cent respectively. Only 7 per cent of people said that there was no alternative.

3. Energy and water efficiency

3.1 Attitudes

Attitudes toward energy and water efficiency, 2007

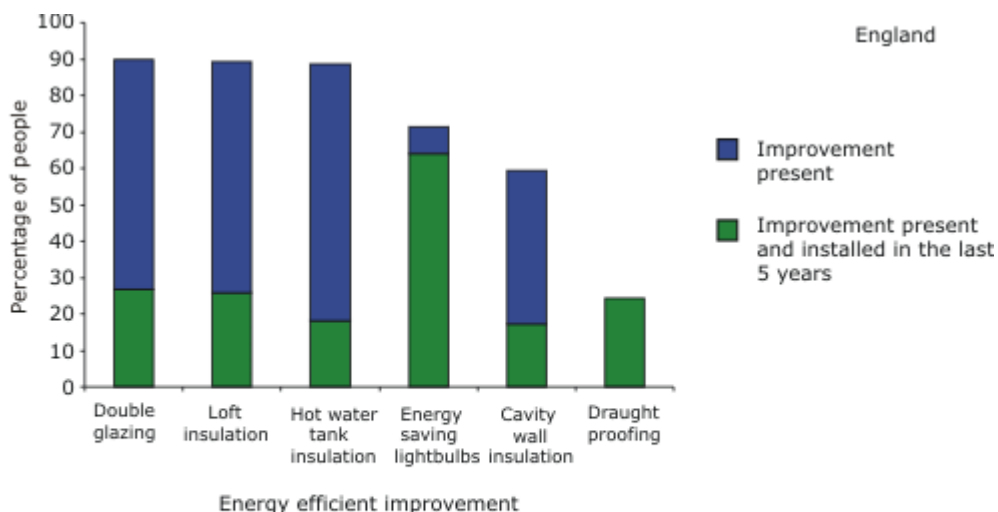


When asked for their attitudes about energy efficiency, 24 per cent strongly agreed or tended to agree that they “don’t give much thought to saving energy in their home”. Far more strongly disagreed or tended to disagree – 63 per cent. Similar proportions agreed and disagreed with the statement, “I would like to install things like insulation but can’t afford it, even if it saves money in the long run” – 41 per cent and 35 per cent respectively. Two thirds strongly agreed or tended to agree that they “would only buy appliances with high energy efficiency ratings, even if they cost more”.

When asked for their beliefs about water use, 33 per cent strongly agreed or tended to agree that they “don’t pay much attention to the amount of water they use at home”. More than half disagreed.

3.2 Behaviours

Proportion of people with energy saving improvements in their home a) at all, b) installed in the last 5 years, 2007



Notes: The proportions for each improvement shown use the number of people who could possibly have those improvements as a base. For example, the proportion of people with loft insulation shows only the proportion of those with a loft who have loft insulation. Only data for those who installed draught proofing in the last 5 years are available and the base for this improvement are those people with no double glazing (10 per cent of the whole population).

Of the energy efficient improvements investigated, 90 per cent of people said that their home had double glazing, and 89 per cent loft insulation and hot water tank insulation. The smallest proportion said that their home had cavity wall insulation or draught proofing, with 59 per cent and 24 per cent respectively.

For most improvements, about a third of people had installed them in the last 5 years. The main exception being that three quarters of those with energy saving light bulbs installed them in the last 5 years.

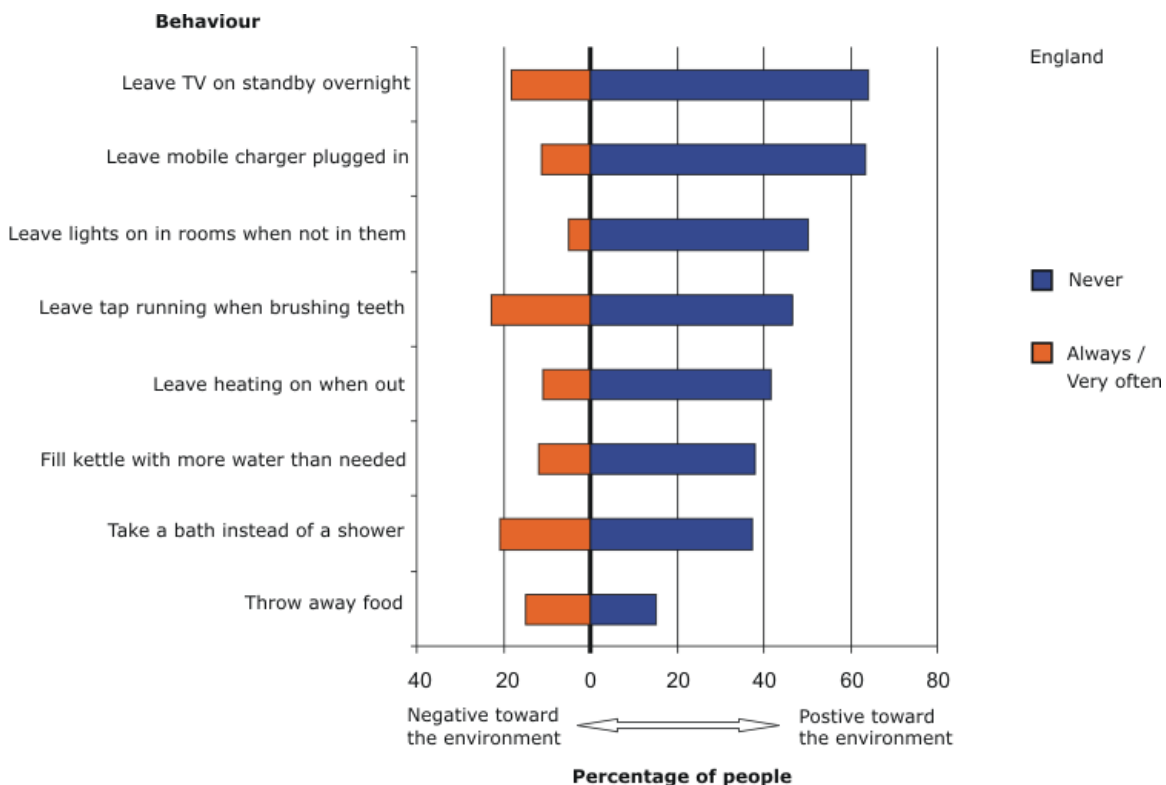
Contextual information from previous surveys:

The proportion of people regularly using energy saving light bulbs, 1993-2007

1993	16%
1996-7	24%
2001	31%
2007*	72%

*These data suggest use of energy efficient light bulbs has continued to increase since 2001. In 2007, 72 per cent had at least one energy saving light bulb, with 35 per cent having 5 or more energy saving light bulbs.

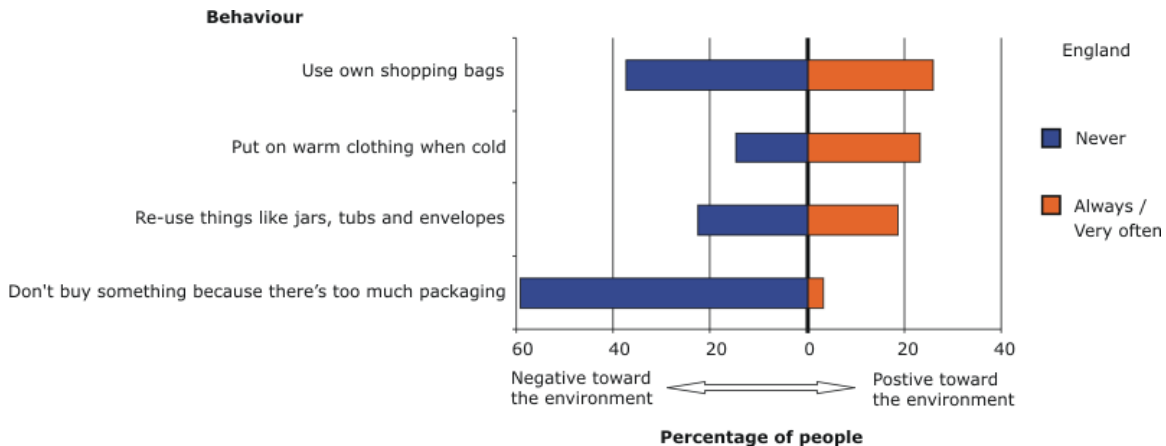
Proportion of people performing wasteful behaviours, 2007



When presented with a list of behaviours that could be seen as potentially wasteful, 64 per cent said that they never “leave their TV on standby overnight”. A similar proportion never “leave their mobile charger plugged in” and half never “leave lights on in rooms when not in them”. The smallest proportion, 15 per cent, said that “never throw away food”.

When people who always or often do these behaviours are considered, the greatest proportion, 23 per cent, “leave the tap running when brushing teeth”. Other wasteful behaviours that large proportions always or often do include “taking a bath instead of a shower” and “leaving the TV on standby overnight”, with 21 per cent and 18 per cent respectively.

Proportion of people performing environmentally friendly behaviours, 2007



When presented with a list of actions that could be seen as environmentally friendly, 26 per cent said that they always or often “use their own shopping bags”. However, a greater proportion, 37 per cent, said that they never do this. The smallest proportion, 3 per cent, said that they always or often “do not buy something because it has too much packaging”. Fifty-nine per cent said that they never do this.

Contextual information from previous surveys:

Proportion of people cutting down on resource use, 1993-2001

Year	Regularly cutting down the amount of gas / electricity the household uses	Regularly cutting down water use
1993	33	32
1996-7	25	29
2001	40	29

The proportion of people never doing things like leaving the TV on standby or lights on in rooms, and minimising wasting water use by never taking a bath instead of shower or leaving the tap running when brushing teeth in 2007 suggests an improvement on these figures.

3.3 Barriers

When prompted with a list of reasons why they do not have more energy saving light bulbs than at the moment, 27 per cent of people said that “they do not fit their light fittings”. Fourteen per cent said that they “are replacing old bulbs as they go”, and the same proportion said that “they had not yet got round to it”. Those who had moved into their current home recently were more likely to give this as a reason. Other reasons included that “they are not as bright as ordinary bulbs” and that “they are too expensive”, given by 11 per cent and 9 per cent respectively.

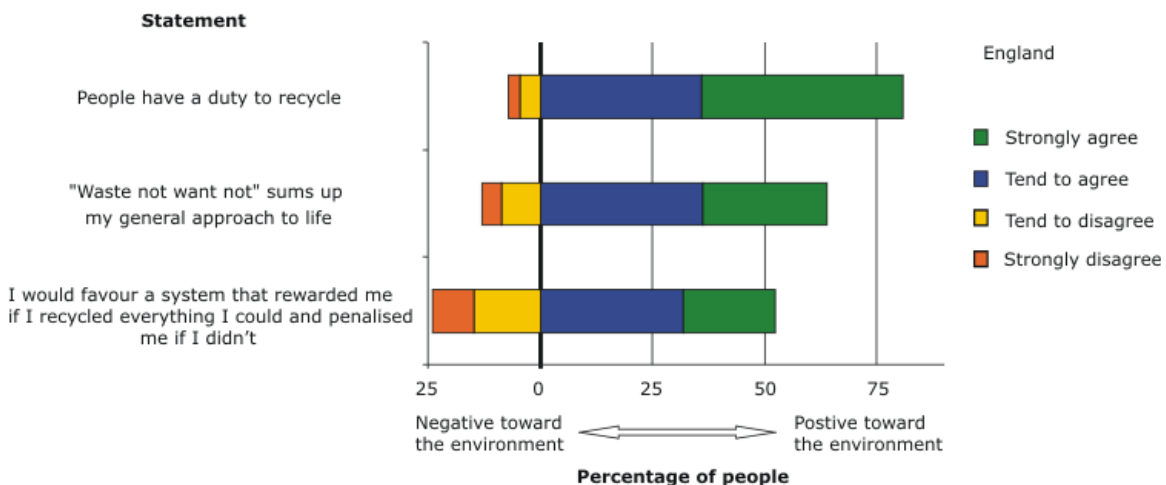
3.4 Water efficiency (water meters)

All individuals without a water meter were asked whether they thought installation of a water meter would increase or decrease their water bill. Eight per cent thought it “would decrease a lot” and 22 per cent thought it “would decrease a bit”. More people thought it would increase – 21 per cent “a lot”, and 19 per cent “a bit”. The remainder said they thought it “would stay about the same”.

4. Recycling

4.1 Attitudes

Attitudes toward recycling, 2007

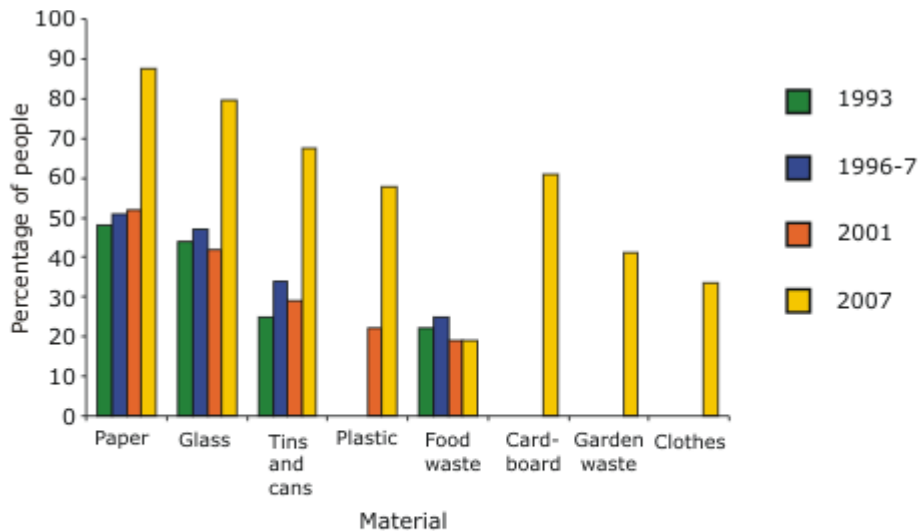


When asked for their attitudes about recycling, 81 per cent strongly agreed or tended to agree that “people have a duty to recycle”. Approximately two thirds strongly agreed or tended to agree that “Waste not want not” sums up their general approach to life”.

A smaller proportion, 52 per cent, strongly agreed or tended to agree that they “would favour a system that rewarded them if they recycled everything they could and penalised them if they didn’t”. However, this was more than double the 24 per cent who strongly disagreed or tended to disagree with this statement.

4.2 Behaviours

The proportion of people recycling different materials, 1993-2007



Notes: In 1993, 1996-7 and 2001 the question asked whether they recycled that material "Regularly", "On a few occasions" or "Not at all". The percentages shown are for those who answered "Regularly" only. In 2007, the questions were "Do you normally put (material) outside to be recycled?", with only "yes" or "no" as options (i.e. doorstep collection or composting), and "What things do you take to recycle?" (i.e. at recycling facilities nearby). People who answered yes to one or the other (or to both) have been defined as recycling that material for 2007.

The most regularly recycled material in 2007 was paper with 88 per cent normally recycling. Eighty per cent recycled glass, 68 per cent tins and cans, and 60 per cent cardboard. Over three quarters of these people were recycling by regular doorstep collections rather than taking material to recycling facilities nearby. Of the materials mentioned, fewest people recycled food waste and clothes with 19 per cent and 34 per cent recycling respectively.

The proportion of people recycling tins and cans has increased by 39 percentage points, plastic by 38 percentage points, glass by 38 percentage points, and paper by 36 percentage points since 2001.

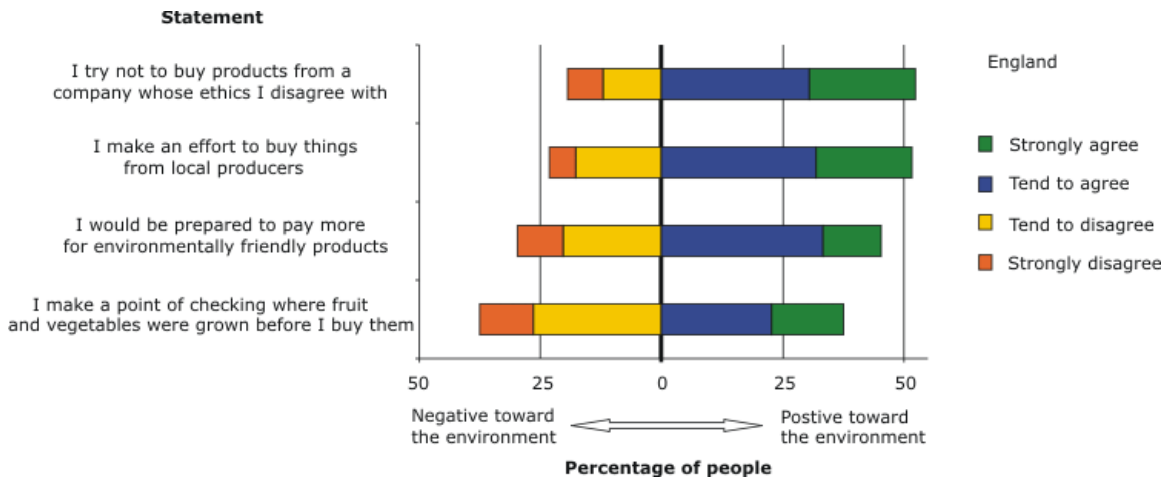
4.3 Barriers

When asked what may be stopping them recycling more than they do at the moment, 41 per cent of people said they "already recycle everything that they can". Of the remaining respondents, 32 per cent said that "there was no doorstep collection", 23 per cent that "there was a lack of facilities" and 17 per cent that they "had nowhere to store the material". A similar question in 2001 also found these 3 reasons to be among the most reported, given by 26, 20 and 21 people respectively when asked why they didn't recycle more regularly. In 2001, 24 per cent of people said that they "could not get to the facilities". This had reduced to 8 per cent by 2007.

5. Eco-friendly purchasing

5.1 Attitudes

Attitudes toward eco-friendly purchasing, 2007

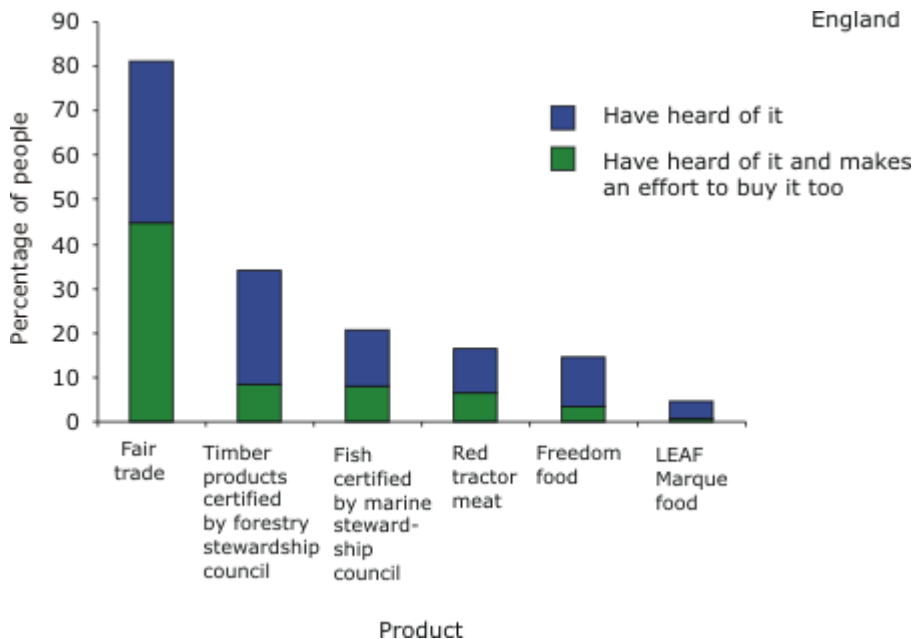


When asked for their attitudes about eco-friendly purchasing, 52 per cent strongly agreed or tended to agree that they “try not to buy products from a company whose ethics they disagree with”. Roughly the same proportion strongly agreed or tended to agree that they “make an effort to buy things from local producers”.

A smaller proportion, 45 per cent, strongly agreed or tended to agree that they “would be prepared to pay more for environmentally friendly products”. Over a quarter disagreed. 38 per cent agreed and 38 per cent disagreed with the statement, “I make a point of checking where fruit and vegetables were grown before I buy them”, although slightly more people *strongly* agreed than strongly disagreed.

5.2 Behaviours

Proportion of people who a) have heard of, b) make an effort to buy eco-friendly products, 2007



Individuals were asked whether they had heard of a range of eco-friendly brands / products, and for those that had, whether they made an effort to buy those brands. 81 per cent had heard of Fair trade products and approximately half of those said they make an effort to buy to buy them. The next most well known product was timber certified by the Forestry Stewardship Council or timber from sustainable sources – heard of by 34 per cent of people. However, only a quarter of those said they made an effort to buy them.

5.3 Barriers

All individuals were asked what may be stopping them from making more environmentally friendly choices in the food and groceries they buy. Forty-seven per cent of people said that “they are too expensive”. Other answers included that “they are not available”, given by 12 per cent, and that “there is not enough labelling”, given by 9 per cent.

6. Biodiversity and animal welfare

Biodiversity and farm animal welfare questions were included on a shorter follow up survey. To help individuals, the following definitions were given before any questions were asked:

1. (Farm) animal welfare means things like:

How farmers look after and breed animals

How farm animals are transported

Conditions at markets and livestock sales

Exports of live farm animals

Conditions at slaughterhouses and abattoirs

2. Biodiversity is the variety of living things and the natural environments that support them. Loss of biodiversity means loss of species of living things through development, pollution, or natural processes

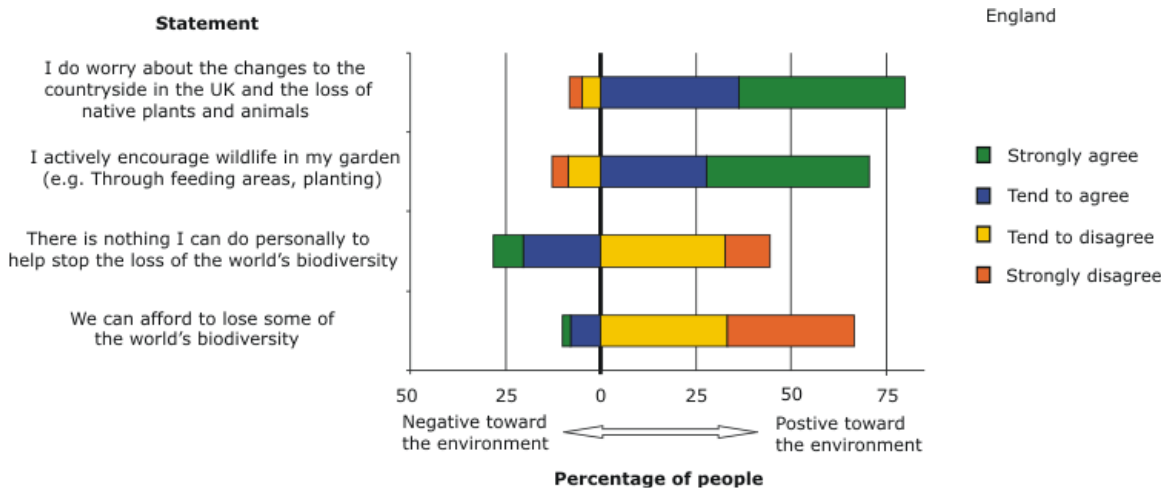
6.1 Attitudes

The amount of thought given to animal welfare and biodiversity loss, 2007

Thought given	Issue		
	Farm animal welfare	Loss of biodiversity in the UK	Loss of biodiversity in the world
A great deal	16%	6%	9%
A fair amount	24%	25%	26%
A little	37%	36%	34%
Have not really given this issue any thought before	22%	32%	30%

Between 30 and 40 per cent of people said that they had given a great deal or a fair amount of thought to farm animal welfare and loss of biodiversity before. However approximately a quarter of people had never given farm animal welfare any thought before, and around a third had not really given loss of biodiversity any thought before.

Attitudes toward biodiversity, 2007



When asked for their attitudes about biodiversity, 71 per cent of those who own a garden strongly agreed or tended to agree that “they actively encourage wildlife in their garden”.

Just over a quarter of people strongly agreed or tended to agree that “there is nothing they can personally do to help stop the loss of the world’s biodiversity”. Ten per cent agreed that “we can afford to lose some of the world’s biodiversity”. A third of people strongly disagreed with this statement.

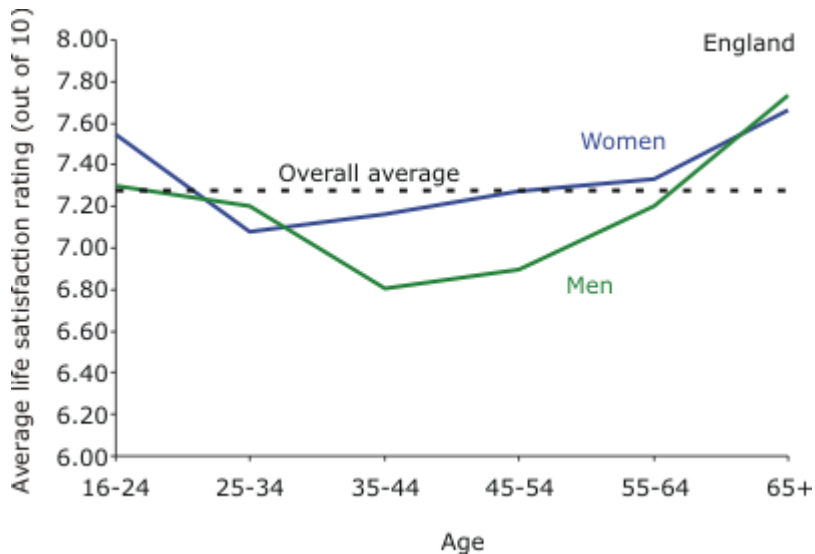
Attitudes toward farm animal welfare, 2007

Thirty-seven per cent of people said that they were happy with all or most aspects of farm animal welfare in this country. Of the remainder, when prompted with a list of specific issues and asked which was their biggest concern, 30 per cent said “how animals are kept on the farm”, 28 per cent said “how they are transported”, and 19 per cent said “exporting of live farm animals”.

7. Wellbeing

On 27th July 2007, selected results from questions on wellbeing included in both the main survey and the follow-up survey were released by Defra. Further analysis is presented below.

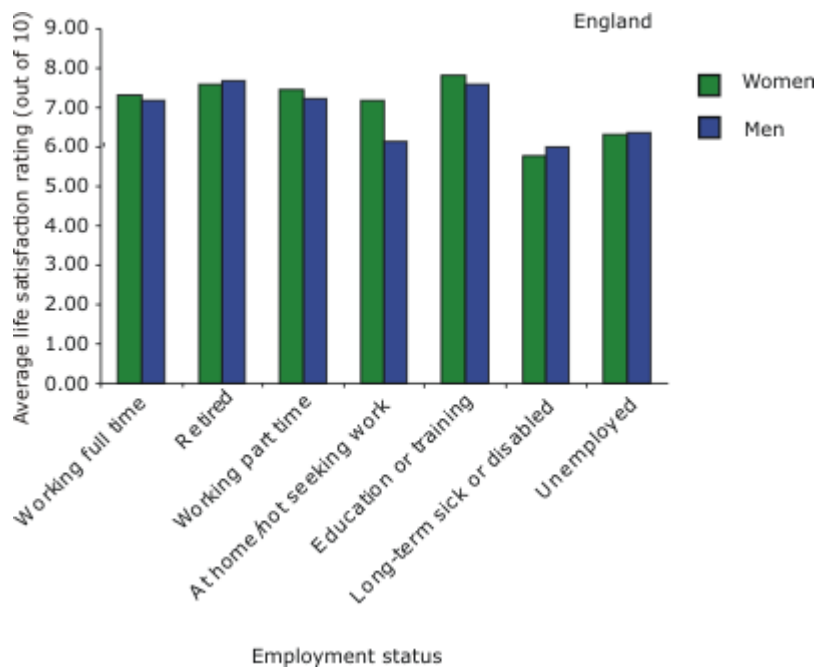
Average life satisfaction by gender and age, 2007



The main wellbeing question on the survey asked individuals to rate their satisfaction with life nowadays on a scale from 0 – 10 (where 0 = extremely dissatisfied and 10 = extremely satisfied).

The average satisfaction with life rating was 7.3. This varied by age and gender. The most satisfied groups were those who were 65 and over, with men and women reporting average ratings of around 7.7. Satisfaction with life was lowest among middle aged men, with a lowest average rating of 6.8 for men aged 35-44.

Average life satisfaction by gender and employment status, 2007

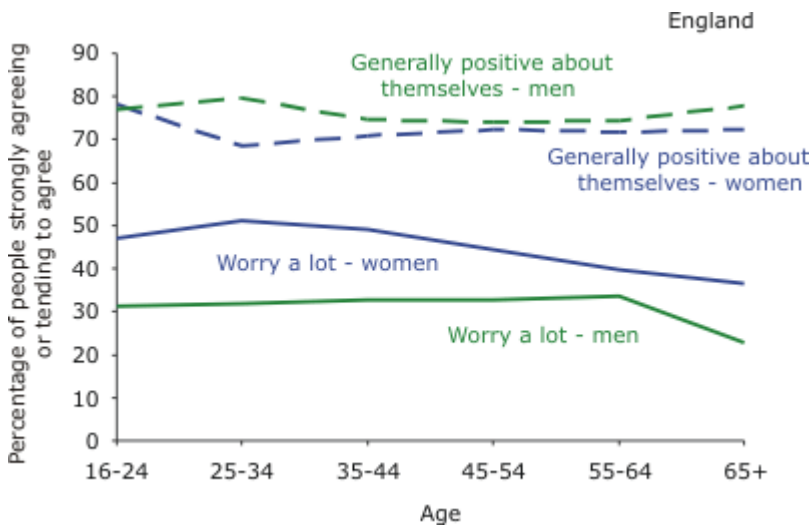


Average satisfaction with life rating varied with employment status and by gender. The group reporting the highest rating on average was those in full time education or training with an average rating of 7.7. The group reporting the lowest rating on average was those on long-term sick leave or disabled with an average rating 5.9.

Those who were unemployed had an average rating of 6.3 while those in retirement tended to be more satisfied with an average rating of 7.7.

Within groups, the biggest difference between men and women was for those staying at home / not seeking work. In this group the average rating for women was 7.2 but for men, only 6.1.

Positivity and tendency to worry by age and gender, 2007



When asked whether they generally feel positive about themselves, 74 per cent of people strongly agreed or tended to agree. There was little variation by age or gender.

When asked whether they worry a lot, 38 per cent of people strongly agreed or tended to agree. Women were more likely to agree, with 45 per cent of women strongly agreeing or tending to agree but only 30 per cent of men. By age, 65s and over were least likely to worry, with 37 per cent of women and 23 per cent of men in this age group strongly agreeing or tending agree.

Notes to editors

1. National Statistics publication

The publication is a Defra National Statistics publication, which reports the headline results from the 2007 survey of public attitudes and behaviours toward the environment. The survey was administered by the British Market Research Bureau (BMRB) and they will provide a full report to Defra which includes analysis of every question, in September/October 2007. Defra will quality assure this report and then make it publicly available, and anonymised data will also be placed in the UK Data Archive at that time. The publication and associated data will be also presented on the Defra statistics website.

2. Basic Quality Information

Relevance: These results are relevant to Defra and Government policy on many areas including climate change. They provide data that will allow assessment of current levels of behaviour in different environmental subject areas, particularly transport, energy efficiency and recycling. The data also give an insight into people's attitudes, and are being used to cluster the population into segments that will facilitate better targeting of information and publicity.

Accuracy: These data were collected by the British Market Research Bureau (BMRB) on behalf of Defra. They were contracted to administer a 45 minute

survey entitled “2007 survey of public attitudes and behaviours toward the environment” on a sample of 3,618. BMRB also administered 15 minutes of additional questions that did not fit on the main survey to a sample of 1,661 as part of an omnibus survey.

Both surveys involved face-to-face, computer-assisted (CAPI) interviews of adults (16+) in England, at home using the sample design detailed below.

Sampling: BMRB utilised ‘random location’ sampling. Primary sampling units (PSUs) for random location samples were selected with a probability proportionate to size, containing approximately 300 addresses. A total of 378 PSUs were selected for the survey, with 9-10 interviews achieved in each area. Research shows only minor divergence between the results from random samples and high quality quota samples such as used here. The results of the weighting analysis, (see below) show the sample taken by BMRB was representative.

Weighting: BMRB’s statistical team carried out an analysis of the finished dataset to identify the best weighting variables and apply cell, rim or other form of calibration weighting as necessary. This checked whether there was need to bring the sample in line with the population profile on key variables. The weights should only be applied if they will demonstrably reduce bias (i.e. there should be a correlation between the demographic data and key survey data), and this was not applicable for these survey results – i.e. BMRB reported that there was no need to weight to correct for any disproportionate element in the sample design.

Timeliness: The fieldwork was completed by June 2007. Analysis and quality assurance were completed in the intervening period to ensure accuracy and accessibility of the results.

Accessibility: The data being released in this news release can be found on the statistics section of the Defra website.

Comparability and coherence: This survey has undergone a major overhaul since data was last collected in 2001 to improve and re-focus the questions to today’s policy agenda. Where possible, time series have been shown. The survey itself can be found on the statistics section of the Defra website so that the wording of a particular question can be compared to questions used to collect similar data on other surveys. For example, the National Travel Survey administered by the Department for Transport includes questions on method / frequency of travel.

National Statistics publication

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